



Status Report

FEB 18 1992

January 1992

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Rick Hansen

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Gary McPherson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Eric Boyd

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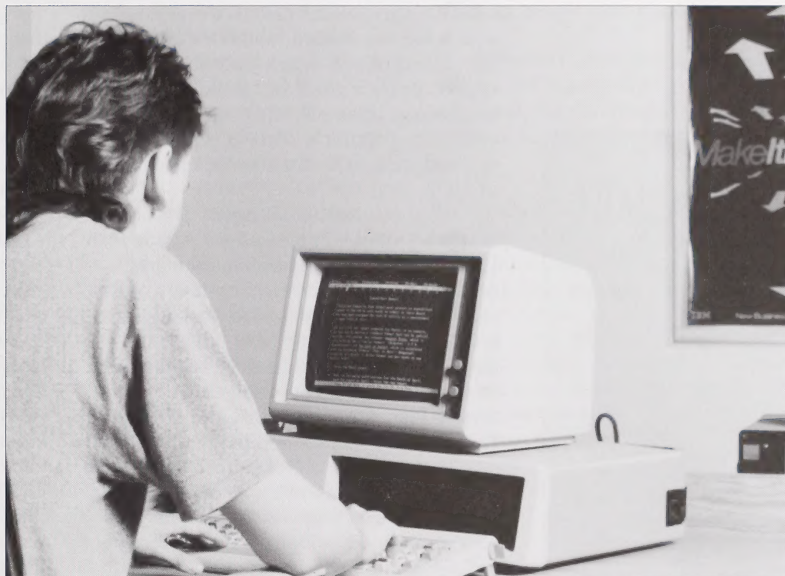
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Message from the Chair

The Year of Community Supports

by Gary McPherson, Chairperson

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of our constituents a Happy New Year. The New Year brings with it a sense of newness; it's a time of year when we recharge and refocus. It's also a time of year when individuals reevaluate their goals and make new resolutions, often with fine results. As an entity, the Premier's Council is no different, and we look forward to the challenges of 1992.

What are those challenges? It's nearly two years since we released the Action Plan (March 1990). On reflection, there has been significant movement on many of its recommendations by the provincial government. However, many have not been addressed, including a major one which is, in our eyes, vital to ensuring the rest of the Action Plan works smoothly and effectively for Albertans with disabilities.

That Action Plan recommendation (8.1) is the establishment of a new approach to the provision of supports for persons with disabilities by developing a single consolidated Community Supports Unit. The Council's Secretariat will be extensively involved in following up on this recommendation which has so far received only a lukewarm reception. The Council believes this is a complex issue that requires a huge readjustment of philosophy and commitment to become reality.

The provincial government currently provides supports to Albertans with disabilities through up to 25 programs, originating from 13 departments. A conservative dollar value estimate of these supports is 450 million dollars per year. Keep in mind that the supports in question are not income related; instead, they are in the form of personal assistance (i.e. interpreters) or technical assistance (i.e. computers). These 25 programs have varying criteria and, as a result, are riddled with inconsistencies and duplications, are not necessarily well-known, and are generally difficult to access. The bottom line for the average consumer is all too often frustration and

confusion. (An article written by our Director of Research and Policy Review, Fran Vargo, entitled *The Community Supports Dilemma*, is contained in the following pages, and clearly illustrates the problems of the present fragmented approach.)

Our intention is to consolidate these 25 programs into one province-wide program which would have a common vision and philosophy, and policies that are fair and equitable. It would also be accessible locally to all Albertans who require these supports. In other words, a person could be assessed in his own community, through a single point of entry, and depending on what provincial budgets would allow, appropriate supports would be provided in the most cost effective manner possible. This could all be accomplished with a minimal amount of bureaucracy and red tape.

I know it sounds simple. But it is not. There are many obstacles in the way; many vested interests that will be threatened, both in government and in the community of stakeholders, including agencies, professionals, and individuals. We feel it's time to set aside our personal concerns in favour of forging a path that will benefit those with the most at stake - Albertans with disabilities. It is our hope that, as you grow increasingly aware of the importance of this concept, we will be able to count on your support. Let your MLA and other elected representatives know that you are committed to it.

It is our intent to circulate a discussion paper on the Community Supports Unit concept to all stakeholders early in 1992. We need to hear your ideas and concerns. We, the Members of the Premier's Council, will continue our commitment to serving the best interests of all Albertans with disabilities throughout the upcoming year. Assisting government in the successful implementation of the Community Supports Unit will be a major step in achieving that end. ■

Status Report

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Asst. Editor: Wendy Buckley

The Status Report is published quarterly by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and is intended to provoke discussion about issues facing persons with disabilities. **This publication is also available on audio cassette** by contacting our office at:

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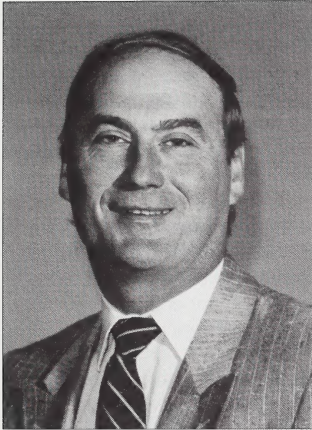
We welcome comments and suggestions from our readers at any time. Please address your correspondence to: The Editor, The Status Report, at the above address.

The opinions expressed in The Status Report are those of their authors and are not necessarily those held by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.



Executive Director's Message

Provincial Councils Meet in Edmonton



by Eric Boyd, Executive Director

On December 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, the Premier's Council hosted the 3rd annual national meeting of provincial advisory councils at the Mayfield Inn. While the mandate of each council is primarily to advise its respective provincial government on policies affecting persons with disabilities, the agenda for the national meetings addressed issues of national consequence, including constitutional reform, National Omnibus Bill, and the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities recently announced by the federal government. The two day conference concluded with a national press conference announcing the joint position of councils represented at the meetings.

In attendance were chairpersons and senior staff representatives from provincial advisory councils in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Newfoundland, which does not have a council, sent 3 representatives from a feasibility committee. The federal government was represented by an official from the Secretary of State. Invitations to participate were also extended to representatives of the national disability movement, including Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped (COPHO), Canadian Disability Rights Council (CDRC), and Advocacy Research Council for the Handicapped (ARCH).

Constitutional Reform

While councils recognized that the views of individual Canadians with disabilities would vary on specific issues, the following beliefs were endorsed by councils represented and are intended to represent the collective position of Canadians with disabilities on issues relevant to proposed constitutional reforms.

1. Councils support a united Canada

where strong federal leadership sets national standards for programs and policies affecting people with disabilities.

2. Councils believe that in the ongoing debates in Canada about government structures, the Government of Canada must continue to commit to cost-shared programs.

3. Councils believe that supports to people with disabilities must be guaranteed through national cost shared legislation, whereby they are accessible, comprehensive, universal, and truly portable across Canada. Only then will Canadians with disabilities have true equality of opportunity and their social and economic integration become a reality. Councils believe there must be a major shift from "support in principle" so often expressed, to actual allocation of resources to activate genuine change.

4. Councils believe that Canada and its provinces must act now, so that people with disabilities are automatically included in major consultations in the country, including constitutional consultations.

In addition to the above, councils reviewed and endorsed a number of the specific constitutional changes proposed by COPHO and CDRC which would enhance equality rights for Canadians with disabilities.

Omnibus Legislation

Councils reviewed, discussed, and unanimously supported the proposed Omnibus Legislation developed by CDRC in consultation with consumers and consumer groups. The Omnibus Legislation proposes specific changes to six separate federal acts through the introduction of an "Omnibus Bill" in the House of Commons. The intent of the proposed changes is to

"Councils support a united Canada where strong Federal leadership sets national standards for programs and policies affecting people with disabilities."



ensure that legislation which is solely within the jurisdiction of the federal government fully complies with the spirit of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The six federal acts include:

Broadcasting Act
Canada Elections Act
Criminal Code/Evidence Act
National Transportation Act
Immigration Act
Access to Information Act.

"The (national) strategy lacks vision and does not reflect commitment to a new framework for policy development at the Federal level..."

In supporting the proposed changes to the above federal legislation, councils commended the efforts of CDRC, and challenged the federal government to act now on its commitment to review other federal legislation affecting Canadians with disabilities, such as the Canada Assistance Plan, Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act, and the Canada Pension Plan to ensure that they reflect a more contemporary attitude towards Canadians with disabilities and enhance opportunities for social and economic integration.

Federal Government - National Strategy

In September 1991, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced the National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. In reviewing the strategy, representatives of provincial advisory councils were critical of the strategy as announced on the basis that:

- the Strategy lacks vision and does not reflect commitment to a new framework for policy development at the federal level;
- the strategy was developed without any substantial consultation with Canadians with disabilities and their representative organizations;
- only 50-60% of the financial resources committed over 5 years (\$158M) represents new resources;
- there is little indication in the strategy that the federal government's commitment to the social and economic integration of Canadians with disabilities is anything more than political rhetoric and a restatement of actions

that are already in place. If social and economic integration is to become reality for Canadians with disabilities, our federal government will have to take a leadership role in ensuring that the "social supports" are in place which will facilitate independent community living, and that a much more aggressive and innovative approach is taken to ensure that Canadians with disabilities acquire the skills and have access to the employment supports which will make them competitive in Canada's labour force.

To summarize, it appears the strategy outlined in the announcement is not driven by a plan of action developed in consultation with consumers, nor is there any indication that the strategies are coordinated to any degree.

The councils went on to challenge the federal government to involve Canadians with disabilities in a process of consultation which would result in:

- a new vision for Canadians with disabilities, reflecting social equality;
- a new framework for policy development which would be consistent throughout all federal government departments;
- principles which would guide consumers and government in the future review and development of policies affecting Canadians with disabilities;
- a comprehensive review of all federal policy affecting Canadians with disabilities, and development of an action plan with clearly defined goals, objectives, strategies and timeframes for their achievement;
- creation of a mechanism within the federal government with a legislated mandate to coordinate the above process and a responsibility to report to the House of Commons.

The two day conference ended with a national press conference where chairpersons of the five provincial councils presented a united position on the issues discussed and the resolutions reached. ■



Gearing Up for the Slopes

by George Duffield
(reprinted with permission from *Disabilities Magazine*, Fall 1991)

Winter! For many people with disabilities, the word has a meaning all its own. Synonyms might be: horrid, boring, terrifying, trapped, yuck, or any number of other adjectives that together imply, "the worst time of the year!"

For others, whether blind, amputee, paraplegic, with polio, cerebral palsy, or any other form of disability, the opposite is true. Winter means FREEDOM! It has become a season when movement with controlled speed and little concern is possible. When one is accepted for his or her own accomplishments, because all in attendance have met and conquered the same challenge. It is a season each actually looks forward to from one year to the next.

What makes the individuals in these two groups so different? The answer is the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing (CADS). This national association has as its mandate the task of making it possible for any person with a disability to enjoy the season of winter through the sport of skiing.

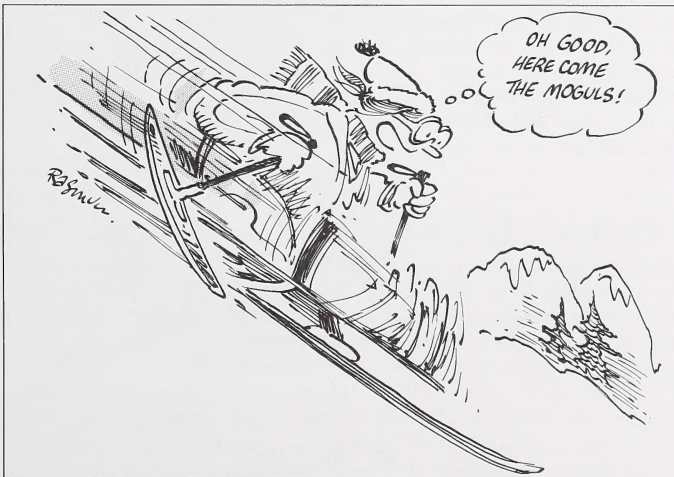
From beginner to expert, recreational

skier to racer, Newfoundlander to British Columbian, more than 300 people, most with one disability but some with more, and a support crew of skiers, both able bodied and with disability, make a point of assembling annually at the Ski Festival for the Disabled. At this event, a casual observer might be surprised at the range of classes: beginner to expert, recreational races for fun and personal development and international competition (i.e., CIBC Disabled Ski Meet which features top racers from around the world on World Cup calibre courses).

CADS has an 18-year history of developing skiers and ski programs for people with disabilities. It leads the way in providing instruction for all, regardless of disability. This approach, teaching a single sport to people with different or multi-disabilities, was unique when CADS began, but has become a pattern to study by many sport governing bodies around the world. The result is that many people who often remained indoors for most of the season, are now enjoying winter and expanding their circle of friends and acquaintances through regular visits to local ski areas. In fact, CADS has made it possible for skiers with disabilities to accompany their able bodied friends on ski vacations. They are fully confident in their abilities, and that they will be able to participate in every aspect of the trip.

This level of achievement has, in many cases, carried over into personal and business lives as well. In fact, the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing has seen participants go on to achieve precedents in their professional lives that a few years earlier would have been considered impossible.

The 1992 Ski Festival for the Disabled is scheduled for April 4-12, at Silver Star Mountain in Vernon, B.C. Many past participants will return to further upgrade their skills, taking part in the SKIMP or "ski improvement" classes. There is always a large group of first-time skiers who arrive, full of trepidation and self doubt. These individuals will be placed in various classes based on ability or degree of impediment.





For information on how you can participate in the 1992 Ski Festival for the Disabled, contact:

Jerry Johnston
Executive Director
Canadian Association for
Disabled Skiing
Box 307
Kimberley, B.C. V1A 2Y9

Alberta Association for
Disabled Skiers
Suite 890
1520 - 4th Street S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2R 1H5

Each class will be assigned a ski instructor who has been specially trained to introduce new skiers to the sport, and ensure that novices learn to ski with confidence and self reliance. There is always plenty of moral support from other skiers, and a general atmosphere of camaraderie and fun. By the end of the week, the majority of the group will be wondering how they could have ignored the sport of skiing for so long. The balance will already be making plans for 1993.

More experienced skiers will have an opportunity to further improve their abilities to include skiing in powder, moguls, more difficult terrain and even racing. A highlight will be to observe some of the international stars of disabled skiing as they participate in the CIBC Disabled Ski Championships. This major event annually brings together teams from approximately ten countries for competition in slalom, giant slalom, Super G

and downhill. Each year, the courses at the meet have provided a major test for the athletes. They reached a new plateau in 1991 when the Women's World Cup downhill course at Sunshine Village Ski Resort in Banff, Alberta, was used for all disciplines except slalom. That test, for both men and women racers, proved that top skiers with disabilities were just as ably equipped and trained to run tough and difficult courses as their able-bodied counterparts. This was another victory for the development of disabled skiing in world competition.

The 1992 Ski Festival for the Disabled will present additional challenges to all participants, from beginner to National Ski Team member. But the major overriding factor, will be that new friends will be made, and longer term friendships will be solidified and expanded as skiers from across Canada and around the world gather to ski together at Silver Star Mountain in Vernon, B.C. ■

Electronic Guide For Blind Joggers



For obvious reasons, it's difficult for visually impaired people to jog. But an invention developed by a University of Victoria professor might change that.

Professor Adam Zielinski has developed an electronic guiding system to keep blind joggers on track. Users of the system wear a pocket-sized sensor and headset, and hear audio signals warning them if they veer off the track. The sensors are activated by an electronic field generated by

a guide wire installed in the track.

While the invention wouldn't allow the blind jogger the luxury of running down the beach or through town, it would certainly allow them to enjoy the essence of the pastime - getting a brisk workout. Zielinski has tested the prototype on four visually impaired people with excellent results, and is currently looking into a North American patent. ■

Is your association or agency sponsoring a provincial or national conference or workshop? If so, please forward the pertinent information to:

Premier's Council on the
Status of Persons with
Disabilities
250, 11044 - 82 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 0T2

THE CHHA '92 CONFERENCE: "Catch A Sound Wave", Vancouver. April 30 - May 3, 1992. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (B.C. Chapter) is sponsoring a national conference at the Delta River Inn, minutes from Vancouver International Airport. A series of educational workshops is planned, with effective communication with the hard of hearing being one of the key issues. For information, contact:

CHHA - B.C.
c/o Westcoast Agenda
708-1755 Robson
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 3B7

Phone: (604) 688-8584 ■



The Community Supports Dilemma

by Fran Vargo, Director of Research and Policy Review

How often have you heard, or read in the paper, of someone who found themselves needing a wheelchair but unable to afford the renovations to make their home accessible? What about many of the so-called "street people" who have mental illnesses that make it impossible for them to care for themselves? Or maybe, as an ordinary citizen, you personally have tried to

get information about a government program only to be shuffled from one person or department to another.

At one time or another, each of us has experienced the frustration of trying to get information or assistance from a bureaucracy. For many people with disabilities this is a frequent occurrence, and because the majority rely on small pensions and low paying jobs for their income, they are at the mercy of the system.

As Gary McPherson pointed out in his message, help for people who need it can come from up to 25 programs in several departments. Often, the trick is to be able to ask just the right questions and to find someone who actually knows the answers. We know what a tough job that can be from the many calls our office gets from people who are confused and angry about their attempts to get the support they need to live independently.

The following scenario demonstrates the kinds of roadblocks people face every day. Although the man

is fictitious, he could easily be someone you know.

"Alan's" Story

Alan, 33 years old, is married with 2 children (5 and 8 years of age); was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 8 years ago; has worked as a trucker since age 18 but is unable to do so any more; has been on sick leave for 8 months.

His company is willing to try him in an office job but he needs some bookkeeping and computer training which the company has said is Alan's responsibility. His disability may prevent him from working full time even if he gets the training to do this job. His wife works full time but it's getting harder to keep up with the needs of the home, her job, the children, and her husband as he becomes less able to help himself or do things around the house.

Because MS usually gets worse over time, Alan's need for help will increase and the resources currently available to them are barely sufficient. They know of one other couple where the husband also has MS; this couple has recently gone on welfare because they could no longer cope financially. Alan is concerned about losing his long term disability pension if he tries to return to work and then fails; with his wife's income, he would not qualify for AISH; Canada Pension Plan disability benefits are small and prevent even part time work.

In order to get the help they need, this family would need to access these programs:

Aids to Daily Living (Alberta Health) - wheelchair, grab bars, other aids

Home Care (Alberta Health) - personal assistance, homemaking

Home Adaptation Program (Municipal Affairs) - home renovations to make wheelchair accessible; if income over \$30,500, will not qualify

Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program (Career Development and Employment) - vocational



Living in the community - for many people with a disability, this means experiencing "the frustration of trying to get information or assistance from a bureaucracy".



"No more frustrating searches for help; no more delays in getting that help; but instead, a system that is able to respond quickly and appropriately to people's needs."

training support, possible adapted computer

Post-secondary institution - a training program that will accommodate Alan's low stamina, possibly offering services to students with disabilities

Community agency (Easter Seals or ACT or other) - wheelchair lift and other modifications to van OR municipal transit (local special transit, if available).

This scene is typical for many people with disabilities. With the exception of a computer training program, which could be accessed by any citizen, all others provide support that allow people to be independent, to live and work in the community. The problem with the present system is that it would probably take a year for Alan to arrange all the supports he needs, and maybe longer.

Wouldn't it make life easier for Alan and the thousands of others like him if he could go to one local office for assistance? Instead of having to learn about several different programs that might be able to help, he could go to one place where staff would work with him to identify his needs and fulfill them quickly. There would be one set of criteria for eligibility; if he was asked to

share the cost of the supports, it would be one amount for all his supports rather than different arrangements for each kind of support needed; and it could be done in a reasonable amount of time, so that he could get on with his vocational retraining, keeping his self esteem and his family intact.

This is what the Community Supports Project is all about - consolidating existing support programs under one administrative umbrella, with individuals getting access to those supports through local offices near their homes. No more frustrating searches for help; no more long delays in getting that help; but instead, a system that is able to respond quickly and appropriately to people's needs.

The Premier's Council has been trying to sell this idea to government Ministers and departments, and will continue to do so. It's an idea that's being discussed in many provinces across the country. Wouldn't it be great if Alberta could set the standard?

Of course, this wouldn't mean the end of frustration with bureaucracies - it would just mean that people with disabilities wouldn't have any more frustrations than anybody else, and that is what equality of opportunity is all about. ■



Rick Hansen Centre

Where to Stay Fit in Edmonton

Which Edmonton fitness facilities are accessible and which are not? You'll find the answer in the 1992 Edmonton Fitness Facility Accessibility Guide. Published by the Rick Hansen Centre, in conjunction with the Canadian Paraplegic Association, the premier edition of this guide outlines the accessibility of 29 facilities within the city. Each facility is rated by eight categories: parking, entrance, interior, change rooms, membership, services and equipment, hours of operation, and general comments.

The guide is available at the Rick Hansen Centre, W1-67 Van Vliet Complex, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H9 (Phone 492-3182), or the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Suite 305, 11010 - 101 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5H 4B8 (Phone 424-6312). ■



Action Plan Update

In our recent survey, we asked you to rate the importance of editorial content in the Status Report. Policy updates and government response to Action Plan recommendations was by far the most popular item. As a result, we've instituted a regular Action Plan Update column in the Status Report, which will outline any movement that has taken place in the three month period between issues.

TRAINING

Alberta Career Development and Employment indicates they are in a consultation process regarding their new policy on vocational training for persons with disabilities. A public announcement should be forthcoming early in 1992. Also expected early this year is the announcement of a pilot project for the transfer of responsibility for retraining from Family & Social Services to Career Development and Employment.



EMPLOYMENT

In response to Action Plan Recommendation 2.7, Alberta Economic Development and Trade established the Ability Plus Program in May 1991. In the fall of 1991, thirteen individuals were selected to receive support under the program, which is designed to provide assistance in the form of interest free loans to qualified entrepreneurs with permanent disabilities. A decision on whether or not the program will accept another round of applications is expected by February.

EDUCATION

In November 1991, the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Education, unveiled his vision document titled *Vision for the 90's...A Plan of Action*. In this paper, Mr. Dinning promises movement in four key areas: development of an integration policy, improved coordination of resources, improved staff skills to meet the needs of the integration policy, and implementation of barrier free standards in Alberta schools.

As this newsletter went to press, the final report of the Yellowhead School Division Integrated Services Review was expected. This report, sponsored by Alberta Education and the Premier's Council, will be the result of independent consultation and study of the province's only school district with a full integration policy. The report is expected to be a useful resource as the government introduces integration policy on a province-wide level.





TRANSPORTATION



Alberta Transportation and Utilities' new policy on barrier-free transportation is expected early this year. Judging by the pilot projects this department announced late in 1991, the new policy should easily conform with the recommendations made in the Action Plan.

The pilot projects include an accessible bus service run in both St. Albert and Calgary, as well as an accessible taxi service in Edmonton and Medicine Hat. All projects should be operational by Spring. As well, Greyhound Lines of Canada, in cooperation with Alberta Transportation and Utilities, will introduce a fully accessible service between Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton in the next few months. Watch the next issue of Status Report for a feature on these initiatives.

ACCESSIBILITY

In September 1991, Alberta Labour released their revised provincial Building Code. It now includes positive response to all sixteen recommendations made by the Barrier Free Design Advisory Committee, which are in turn supported by the Premier's Council (Action Plan recommendation 7.1). The most significant change in the Code is that all apartment buildings four stories or less will have to have at least the main floor fully accessible.

As well, the Barrier Free Design Advisory Committee met twice during the fall to review its *Barrier Free Design Guide*. A revised edition, in line with the new Building Code, will be published this spring.



HOUSING

As recommended by the Action Plan (6.1, 6.2), Alberta Municipal Affairs announced in December 1991 the formation of a cross-disability advisory committee on housing. The committee will help identify the housing needs and develop a long term strategy to provide appropriate and adequate housing for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Also in December, the Handicapped Housing Society of Alberta, with funding from the Wild Rose Foundation, released a report detailing their work in developing a provincial housing registry (recommendation 6.1).



PERSONAL SUPPORTS

In December 1991, Alberta Health began implementation of its Self Managed Care Pilot Project in four Health Units: Calgary Health Services, Edmonton Board of Health, Red Deer Regional, and South Peace. Part of the existing Home Care program, the Pilot Project will allow clients to access funding to self-manage those services they require. Training of Health Unit personnel has been completed, and the Pilot Project is now reviewing its first applicants.



Three new initiatives designed to enhance benefits currently under the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program were introduced late in 1991. The first is the Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP) which will be administered through CNIB. The program, announced in November, will provide blind and visually impaired Albertans with technical, low vision and/or electronic travel aids.

The second initiative is Monitoring for Health, a program co-sponsored by the Canadian Diabetes Association. Put into place October 1, 1991 this program replaces and enhances benefits provided to people with diabetes by Alberta Aids to Daily Living.

The third initiative is the Power Mobility Aids Program. This program, which is in the formative stages, will allow those who qualify for a power wheelchair to obtain the equipment through a cost-sharing process with Alberta Aids to Daily Living.

While the Council applauds all these initiatives in the area of personal supports, it strongly believes in the need for a single, unified community supports unit (see Message from the Chair). As such, the Council will pursue this goal in 1992, with one of the first steps being a meeting with provincial organizations on February 26th of this year.

INFORMATION

As per Action Plan recommendation 10.1, the Council continues to support work on the implementation of a province-wide information network for persons with disabilities. A stakeholder's consultation was held January 27, 1992, at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Edmonton. For more information, contact:

Alberta Information Network
10426 - 81 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1X5
Phone: 433-5344 ■





New Faces on Council

The Premier's Council sends out a warm welcome to three new Members - Gary Taylor of St. Paul, Phillip Stephan of Red Deer, and Neil Marshall of Calgary. The Council also welcomes back Members Peter Aubry and Cheryl Crocker, who have been reappointed for an additional term.

On October 6th, 1991, the three year terms of office expired for Mr. Aubry, Ms. Crocker, as well as Randy Hogle and Jean Packer. Mr. Hogle and Mrs. Packer indicated they would not seek reappointment. That, along with Martin Goldstein's July 26th resignation due to a move to Ontario, left three positions available.

Gary Taylor (St. Paul), who has been visually impaired since birth, has 22 years experience as a teacher and counsellor, of which a good deal has been spent working with students with a diverse range of disabilities. Currently, he is a Support Programs coordinator and Guidance Counsellor for Glen Avon Protestant School District #5. Mr. Taylor has a B.A. in Psychology and a B.Ed. (AD) from the University of Saskatchewan.



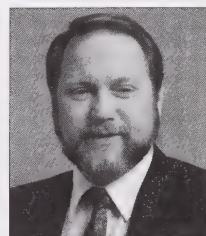
Gary Taylor



Neil Marshall

Neil Marshall (Calgary) brings a wealth of knowledge from Alberta's deaf and hard of hearing community to the Council. Currently, he is the President of the Alberta Association of the Deaf, and a member of both the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association of the Deaf, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (Calgary). Mr. Marshall graduated from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. with a B.A. in Computer Science and Mathematics. He is involved in systems work in Calgary.

Phillip Stephan's (Red Deer) experience with Alberta's mentally disabled community will be invaluable to the Council. At present, he is the Executive Director and C.E.O. for the Red Deer Association for the Mentally Handicapped, an organization he's been a part of for close to four years. Mr. Stephan has a B.Comm. from the University of Alberta, as well as a Diploma in Business Administration from Red Deer College.



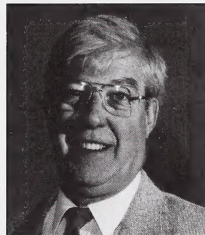
Phillip Stephan

The three new Council Members were chosen from a total of 87 excellent nominations. Major criteria used in determining the successful nominees were geographic representation, disability knowledge, and contribution to the field of disability. The Premier's Council would like to thank all who took part in the nomination process. ■



This is Your Council

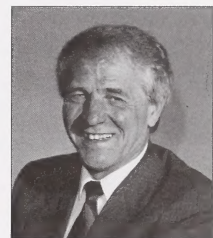
It's safe to say that readers of the Status Report have a good idea who the Chairpersons of the Premier's Council are. Rick Hansen, the Council's Honourary Chairperson, and Gary McPherson, Chairperson, have long been recognized champions of the disabled community. But how many readers know the other twelve Members of the Council? It's occurred to us at the Status Report that these dedicated and talented Albertans often toil in anonymity. We've decided to change that, so beginning in this issue, and continuing over the next three issues, we'll profile Council Members in alphabetical order.



Peter Aubry

Since June of 1975, **Peter Aubry** (Calgary) has been President of Aubry Consultants Ltd. Prior, he worked as a manager for Ingersoll Rand Canada, after receiving a B.Sc. in geology from Michigan Technological University. Mr. Aubry has a son with schizophrenia, and has been involved with the Calgary Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society. At present, he serves with the Mental Health Promotion Committee.

Harvey Ball (Edmonton) has a diverse professional background, including real estate and brokerage sales. The bulk of his experience, however, is in the construction industry. At present he is Director and President of a family construction and development business. Mr. Ball has multiple sclerosis.



Harvey Ball



Kaye Brock

Kaye Brock (Calgary) has a wealth of experience working in the field of brain injury. In 1981, she began working with the Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured, serving as both President and Service Volunteer. Three years later, she assisted in the establishment of the Head Injured Relearning Society, of which she is now President. Ms. Brock is also a founding member of the Head Injury Association of Alberta and does volunteer work with various other community organizations. ■



Survey Says...

Needless to say, the overwhelming response we received from our recent survey surprised us. Public relation types will tell you that the most you can expect from a newsletter survey is a return of one to two percent, so we expected fifty to one hundred responses from our readership of 5000 plus. Well, responses poured in by the bag load, until at last we were left with 530 - a full ten percent of our readership.

With a few exceptions, it seems we're doing our job well. While space prevents us from printing the exact results, here's a breakdown of your responses.

Who are you? The largest number of respondents (31 percent) are members of non-profit organizations. Persons with disabilities are the next largest group (21 percent), with members of the provincial government rounding out the top three (19 percent). The majority of respondents are

from Edmonton (37 percent), with the remainder hailing in almost equal amounts from Calgary, other cities, or towns and farms.

Your interest in the Status Report is more often than not based on your job (44 percent).

The greatest percentage of respondents read almost all the material in the Status Report (57 percent). Almost all of you find the stories are the right length (95 percent). You passed us with flying colors when it

came to ease of reading (65 percent - good, 31 percent - excellent) and writing style (71 percent - good, 24 percent excellent). You also gave us good grades for appearance (57 percent - good, 39 percent -

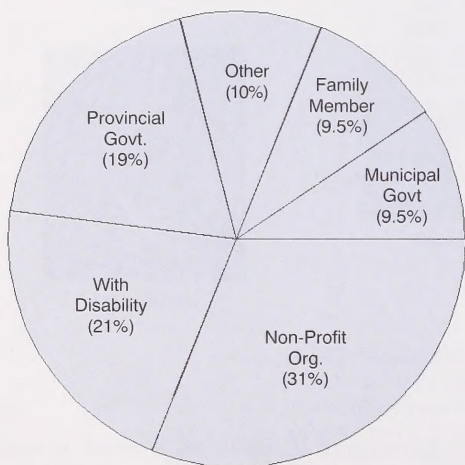
excellent). Your overall opinion of the Status Report? Good, according to 69 percent of responses, and excellent, according to a further 27 percent.

When it comes to ranking subject material, policy updates was the clear winner, capturing 21 percent of the "very interesting" vote. Feature articles followed at 19 percent, with Message from the Chair and Executive Director's Update coming in a tie for third at 16 percent. Policy updates from other jurisdictions, community calendar, profiles, and others fell into place behind, in that order.

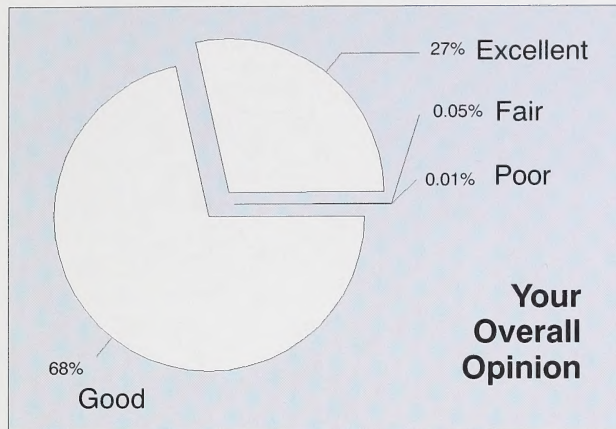
We were astonished to find that 81 percent of our readers don't realize Status Report is available on cassette tape. We hope there weren't any readers with a visual impairment in this group, and we'll certainly attempt to advertise this fact more prominently. A more pleasant surprise was learning that 78 percent of our readers were in favor of paying a small subscription. The intent of this question was to determine if people thought the Status Report had any intrinsic value - we have no plans to charge for the publication, but thanks for the support, anyhow.

Finally, there's the comments section. Again, we weren't ready for the number of comments we received, or the diversity of their nature. While we can't print every comment, it's useful to address the most recurring ones. At least twenty came from people who clearly wanted us to address specific disabilities and, in particular, mental disability and learning disability. While we will take more care ensuring more editorial on the particular issues of these disabilities, we have to reiterate that the Premier's Council and, subsequently, the Status Report, have a cross-disability focus. We simply don't have time or resources to focus on any individual disability. There are excellent newsletters published by disability specific groups; our office would be happy to direct anyone to them.

The second most recurring comment was a request for more Action Plan updates



Who Responded?



and government response to the recommendations in the Plan. To address this obviously important area, we've instituted an Action Plan Update page in the Status Report to keep you abreast of all developments.

That leaves a host of other comments, some of which included: use more pictures, use more personal articles, use less lofty English, use more humor/cartoons, put in a "letters to the editor" page, and use more articles on education/employment issues.

We hear you, and we thank you for telling us what you think. In return, we'll do our best to use any of your suggestions that are relevant and will help us maintain and increase the quality and impact of the Status Report. ■

Ability Plus Update

Thirteen Alberta entrepreneurs with disabilities will receive funding under the Ability Plus pilot program. The thirteen, who were selected out of a total of 31 applicants, will receive financial assistance up to \$10,000 in the form of an interest free loan. They'll also receive business counselling assistance.

According to Alberta Economic Development and Trade, who developed the program, the response was excellent, in both the diversity of the business proposed and the representation throughout the province.

The objective of the program is to increase business opportunities for persons with permanent disabilities. Economic Development and Trade has indicated they are considering extending the program to another round of applications. Look for an update in future issues of the Status Report. ■

Call for New Members

The Yellowhead Regional Single Point of Entry Committee has four membership spaces (consumer representatives) available. One will be filled by a person with a disability who is a member of an organization which focuses on issues of disability. The only other qualification is that the member resides in the Jasper or Alberta West Central Health Unit regions.

The Yellowhead Regional Single Point of Entry Committee is an advisory and planning body which serves the major stakeholders of long term care in the above Health Unit regions. The Committee, which was established one year ago, also assists in the coordination and implementation of Single Point of Entry activities.

Anyone wishing to propose her/his name, or for more information, please contact:

Muriel Nelson, Chairperson
Yellowhead Regional Single Point of Entry Committee
Box 6240, Edson, Alberta T7E 1T7
Telephone: 723-4421 ■

Silent News Is Here

Television's first network newscast for people with hearing disabilities has been launched by CBC Newsworld. Silent News wraps up the week's top stories every Saturday. The half hour package, anchored by Henry Whalen and interpreted by Michael Vorontsov, uses American Sign Language as well as closed captioning. Silent News is a co-production of The Disability Network and CBC Newsworld. Check with your local cable company for details. ■

Athletes with Disabilities Strike Gold

History will be made at the Canada Winter Games to be hosted by Grande Prairie in 1995. For the first time, athletes with disabilities will compete in the national event. A decision to add men's wheelchair basketball and men's disabled downhill skiing to the list of events was finalized by federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Sport in November '91. The decision was agreed to in principle in 1989.

The 1993 Canada Summer Games in Kamloops will also be a first for athletes with disabilities. A number of wheelchair track and field events for men and women, as well as swimming events for women with visual impairments, have been added to the traditional able-bodied events. ■

Electronics Combat Paralysis

Electronically activating paralyzed muscles - it's a technique on the medical horizon. A tiny electronic stimulator, small enough to be injected by hypodermic needle, may soon be ready for human testing.

That message was delivered at a recent science conference at the Illinois Institute of Chicago by Philip Troyk of the Pritzger Institute of Medical Engineering. According to Troyk, persons who have lost muscle control because of spinal cord injuries or strokes are expected to be the first to receive the microstimulators.

As many as 50 of the implants would be used to flex a paralyzed muscle or reinvigorate a disfunctioning bladder, bowel or larynx. Initially, the recipient may have to push a button to activate the electronic stimulators. But eventually, triggers might be implanted in the motor cortex of the brain. ■

No Charge Decoders

Deaf or hearing impaired customers of Rogers Cablesystems have reason to be pleased with the company. On December 4th, 1991, Rogers announced its two million dollar TVSee program, which will offer deaf viewers free closed-caption decoders.

To get a decoder, Rogers customers will simply have to fill out an application form, verify they are deaf or hearing impaired, and supply a \$25 refundable security deposit.

For many Albertans who are deaf, this announcement has a sour note. The company's only service in our province is to one half of Calgary. Just prior to press time, Status Report contacted Shaw cable and Videotron Communications, who are two of the largest cable TV operators in Alberta. Neither company was planning to follow Rogers' initiative at that time. ■

